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HORACE WALPOLE

A ROMANTIC DRAMA

BY

GUSTAVE SIMONSON

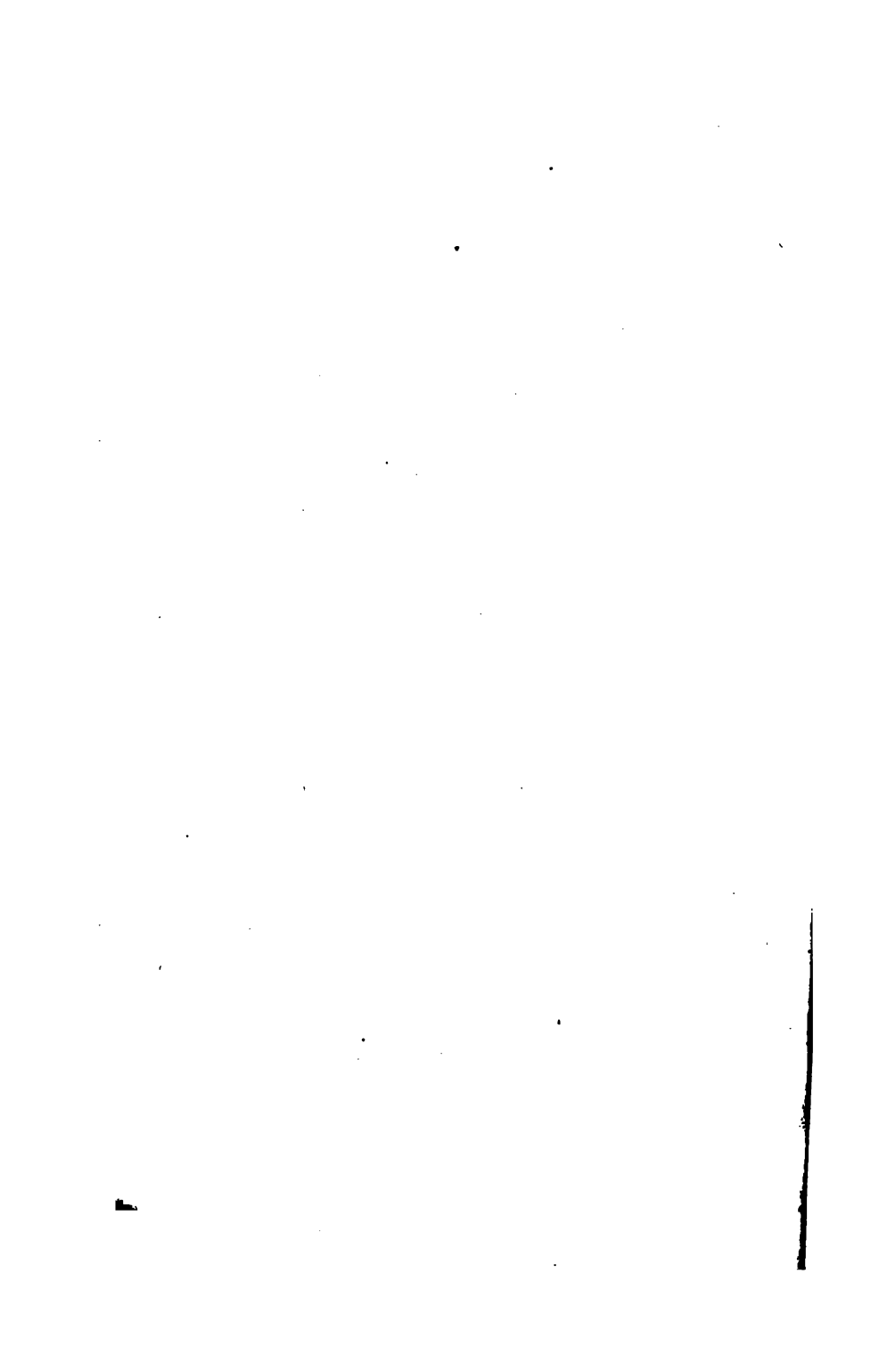
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HORACE WALPOLE

A ROMANTIC DRAMA
IN FOUR ACTS

BY

GUSTAVE SIMONSON

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NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD & COMPANY

1913

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CHARACTERS

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, *Prime Minister.*

HORACE WALPOLE, M.P., *His son; about twenty-five years old.*

CAPTAIN HENRY CONWAY, *Friend of Horace.*

GEORGE SELWYN, M.P., *Friend of Horace, about twenty-five years of age, like Conway.*

LORD CHESTERFIELD, *About forty-five years of age.*

LORD CARLINGTON, *A Peer; Jacobite, in correspondence with the Pretender, and the chief organizer of the projected rising in London.*

LORD HAXTON, *Jacobite.*

SIR PERCY CAMPBELL, *Scotch Jacobite gentleman.*

FIREBRACE PENDREL, *Jacobite.*

JENKS, *Young servant of Sir Robert Walpole.*

LADY VIRGINIA CARLINGTON, *Daughter of Lord Carlington; about nineteen years old, ardent Jacobite, proud, in love with Horace.*

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU, *About forty-five years of age.*

LADY TOWNLEY, *About twenty-five years of age.*

Guests of Lady Townley; Jacobite Gentlemen; and Soldiers in Act II.

The scene in Act I is a parlour in Lady Townley's house in London.

The scene in Act II is a private room of Lord Carlington's mansion in London.

The scene in Act III is a private room in Sir Robert Walpole's residence in London.

The scene in Act IV is a large room at Strawberry Hill, Horace Walpole's home near Twickenham.

The time of the action of Act I is 1745 (the year of the last Jacobite rebellion), just after Prince Charles's occupation of Derby, when his success was believed by many to be probable; thus leading to the projected rising in London, which conspiracy involves the participants in disaster. —Act II occurs in the night, a day after the time of the first act.—Act III about four weeks later. —Act IV (an epilogue), fifty years later.

ACT I

SCENE.—*Parlour at Lady Townley's, with chairs, tables, etc. In the back-ground, card-table.*

[*Present: Horace, Carlington, Selwyn, Chesterfield; Lady Virginia; Lady Montagu; Lady Townley; Haxton; Campbell; and Guests—in the course of the act Captain Conway and Sir Robert Walpole.*]

Chesterfield. You have again won, Lady Montagu, your cards seem to be as irresistible as your wit.

Lady Montagu. I fear that our victory was due entirely to our luck, combined, of course, with Mr. Selwyn's matchless skill.

Lady Townley. Nonsense! Mr. Selwyn never had any skill, in spite of my desperate attempts to teach him the game. Besides, he was half asleep during the entire last hand, he played so badly.

Selwyn. How cruelly unjust you are, Lady Townley; you begrudge your vanquished slave the only satisfaction which you deign to let him have, of defeating you at cards, although conquered in——

Lady Townley. Sleepy simpleton, you nodded while dealing, and almost snored while taking the tricks.

Chesterfield. No, Lady Townley, I must defend my sentimental friend—his eyes were wide open, fixed dreamily upon his fair adversary.

Lady Montagu. My Lord Chesterfield, you know, while the most ingenious of flatterers, takes a malicious pleasure in provoking combats of wit among his friends.

Lady Townley. In which he is skilful enough to direct the combatants, while avoiding the shafts himself.

Selwyn. Lady Montagu also knows how to provoke, only in a different way. The late Mr. Pope was her most notable victim. The Marquis of Linbury has often related that famous love-declaration of the great poet to Lady Mary, which she extinguished in a burst of laughter.

Lady Montagu. Poor Mr. Pope! But even great poets, who always live in the clouds, sometimes become earthly.

Chesterfield. The Marquis, I hear, has married off the last of his five daughters.

Lady Townley. Those fat dowdies! What a load off his mind;—but he must have paid for it dearly. And how fares his younger brother, Lord Claybourne, with his new consort?

Selwyn. He deeply regrets his first wife.

Chesterfield. So does the second one. Rumour has it that they are hardly on speaking terms with each other, and that a fashionable divorce is impending.

Lady Montagu. What! another? It seems to

rain divorce suits this year. It would almost be a good plan for Parliament to pass a general law divorcing all the people of England, and be done with it.

Lady Townley. What a dreadful scheme!

Selwyn. And what would be the advantages of such a law?

Lady Montagu. Oh! very many. It would save a vast expense; those that pleased could marry again; those that are now unhappy would be released from their misery; while many reputations now in great peril, would be saved.

Lady Townley. I fear that England is not yet far enough advanced for such a law. But we are neglecting our friends. Lord Carlington, you do not join us in our nonsense. You seem as grave as a statesman out of place or a parson disappointed of a bishopric.

Carlington. In these troublous times, we cannot always be merry, even in the presence of wit and beauty.

Lady Montagu. Surely public affairs, which are mostly a huge joke, can worry no one.

Chesterfield. I trust your Lordship is not distressed at the disturbances in the Northern part of the kingdom. Even our North-British friend Sir Percy Campbell seems to be a little moved by the absurd rising of the Pretender's misguided adherents.

Sir Percy. We must bear with patience what

changes take place. Is there any further news of the rising?

Chesterfield. Only that the Pretender, with a ragged horde of half-naked Highlanders and moss-troopers and a few misguided fanatics of the better class, after effecting a landing several weeks ago, marched to Edinburgh where he held a mimic court, dispensed visionary honours to his poverty-stricken and half-witted supporters, and is now marching into England. [*Horace and Virginia step forward from an open door where they have been listening.*]

Virginia [*To Horace*]. Misguided fanatics he calls them! How ungenerous to speak thus of men who believe they have drawn their sword in defence of their rightful king.

Horace. They may think so, but enthusiasm for a hopeless and bad cause is no measure of its reasonableness.

Virginia. Time will show whether the cause is as hopeless or bad as you think, Horace. Await the event, before you condemn.

Horace. You surely can have no sympathy with treason, Virginia.

Virginia. It will not be treason if Prince Charles succeeds; it will be a restoration.

Horace [*With comic gravity*]. Is it possible that my charmer is a Jacobite—that I, a member of Parliament, and the son of England's prime minister, am enthralled in love's charm by a fair rebel? What am I to think of such sentiments?

Virginia. Think only that I love you. Is not that enough?

Horace [*Rapturously*]. No, your love is not enough. I must have you, Virginia; you, to be mine forever.

Virginia. Horace!

Horace. Virginia, why do you always refuse? Come, fly with me; I have wealth, position, everything that can make our lives happy.

Virginia. Your father and my father——

Horace. I know they are deadly enemies. And should we remain unhappy to gratify the prejudices of two obstinate old men, who have neither understanding nor sympathy with the feelings of two young hearts? The one, a hard-headed, old statesman; the other, a gloomy disappointed partisan of a lost cause. Virginia, you do not love me.

Virginia. Horace, hear me. I am true to you, my heart is yours, but my hand I cannot yet give.

Horace. And why?

Virginia. I cannot now tell. Horace, wait; if you love me, you may soon be able to show me how much.

Horace. What is the meaning of this mysterious delay, what secret obstacle—— [*Enter Sir Robert Walpole, all rise.*]

Sir Robert. A merry meeting. Greetings to you all. Lady Townley, I kiss your hand; glad to see you, my lord. [*To Chesterfield.*] Gentlemen, your servant— [*Bowing stiffly to Lord Carlington and his friends.*] Lady Montagu is, of course,

always to be found in every haunt of wit, where my bookish son Horace seeks his inspiration.

Lady Townley. Your sarcastic compliments, Sir Robert, are misplaced here. We may not be very bright, but our poor wits will not compare unfavourably with that of the House which you rule.

Sir Robert. Oh, the House of Commons,—a necessary utility for which I entertain the highest regard.

Lady Montagu. Such as we all have for servants who serve their masters when they do not rob or betray them.

Sir Robert. You are severe, Lady Mary. Our friend and Mr. Selwyn here——

Lady Townley. Who never attends except when he has no handier place to sleep in——

Sir Robert. I was saying, our friend Mr. Selwyn here, who is a most useful though a somewhat irregular attendant, will stand by me when I say, that with all the criticism which faction and disloyalty have heaped upon it, the House of Commons is the bulwark of our liberties, and the defender of the Hanoverian succession.

Virginia. Until some other succession takes its place——

Sir Robert. Perhaps, Madam, your youthful sympathy may influence your opinion,——

Selwyn. Or the hair-brained expedition of James the Second's grandson and his horde of North-British savages and English adventurers——

Sir Percy. Whatever causes my countrymen may espouse, they hardly deserve such epithets, Mr. Selwyn. They at least know how to fight and die for what they deem right.

Carlington. Nor are they merely the bribed supporters of a government for which they care nothing.

Sir Robert. These are big words, my lord ; such charges are not so lightly flung at the representatives of the people.

Carlington. Representatives of the people ! They represent only their own pockets,—and would betray their present master for another, if paid to do so.

Sir Robert. Your sentiments, my lord, are well known to me. The present establishment is upheld by our representatives, and in the House of Commons, at least, disloyalty dares not raise its head. While a few silly fanatics may be ready to betray the country, for their own ends, to a foreign pretender, with the French King's instructions in his pocket, and a rabble of bandits at his back, our Commons' House of Parliament is true to the public welfare, and the country is satisfied, and well-affected to the government, and happy.

Carlington. Well-affected, did you say ? You are prime minister, Sir Robert, look about you and see how well-affected the people are to the government. Discontent everywhere ; England ignored in the councils of Europe ; the burden of taxation impoverishing even the prosperous, and driving the

people to desperation, while a crowd of pensioners and place-holders grow rich on the public treasury. Do you call that a healthy condition of the country, that less than a generation ago was the envy and terror of Europe?

Sir Robert. My lord, you utter but the sentiments we always hear from those out of office and from Jacobites. The former we must endure; of the latter we shall soon be relieved by the hangman.

Lady Montagu. That will interest our friend Mr. Selwyn,—executions are the only sights which get him out of bed before the afternoon.

Lady Townley. I hope, Sir Robert, that when it comes to any such extreme measures, you will at least spare our old friend Mr. Shippen.

Sir Robert. You mean old Will Shippen, the humorous Jacobite who represents the University of Oxford. His sentiments are known to everybody, but the old fox is too careful to put his neck into a halter.

Selwyn. He paid you a high compliment the other day.

Sir Robert. And what was it?

Selwyn. It was after the house rose. He said, pointing to the retiring members: "After all, Sir Robert and I are the only two honest men in Parliament; he is for King George and I am for King James; but the other fellows only want places and pensions under King George or King James."
[Laughter.]

Carlington. Will Shippen evidently understands the principles of Sir Robert's supporters.

Sir Robert. Or rather those who wish the hopeless cause success, my lord.

Sir Percy. Is its failure so certain?

Selwyn. It was rumoured this morning that the Pretender's army was already in England, after eluding the force sent out against it.

Lady Townley. How dreadful! We shall all be massacred by those half-naked Highlanders.

Sir Robert [*Laughing*]. Have no fear. When once they meet the King's troops they will be scattered like chaff before the wind—and then the needy followers of the Prince will doubtless give him up for the price of £30,000, which has been set on his head.

Virginia. An equal price has been set by the Prince on the head of the Elector of Hanover.

Sir Percy. Whatever be the result of this rising, the young Prince will never be betrayed by those who fight for him.

Sir Robert. Such has not been their conduct in the past. You forget, Sir Percy, what happened to Charles the First.

Lady Townley. A truce to this dreadful politics;—is not even a quiet home like ours sacred to you wicked politicians?

Sir Robert. One of the great charms of Lady Townley's drawing-room is, that one meets here not only wit and beauty, but all parties, Whigs and Tories, Hanoverians and Jacobites—it is a real

pleasure to meet so varied an array of talent and opinion.

Lady Townley. But that is no reason why you should make our peaceful house a battle-ground. Oh, you dreadful men! You are all corrupted and estranged from us by politics.

Lady Montagu. And now that Mr. Horace is also a member of Parliament, we may soon see him as rarely among us as his wicked old father.

Lady Townley. Never fear. There is a magnet with which we can always attract him. [*Looking significantly at Virginia.*]

Chesterfield. I understand Mr. Horace made a great address to the electors of Kellington.

Selwyn. How the yokels did stare at that famous speech! How they applauded!

Chesterfield. Did they understand it?

Selwyn. Impossible. Conway and Williams and I had a hand in preparing it,—and I'm sure none of us could—Horace himself certainly did not understand it.

Lady Townley. Mr. Horace, do not let them make fun of you. Your speeches must have been at least better than most of those I have heard in the House of Commons.

Chesterfield. Mr. Horace is very properly trying to follow the example of his distinguished father, and will doubtless be an ornament to the House as he now is of the drawing-room.

Selwyn. I am told that a Walpole has generally sat in every parliament for the last three hundred

years. Horace has a long line of ancestors to emulate.

Horace. Our ancestors! Why, if the ancestors of most of us were alive to-day, they would probably be hanged. [*Laughter.*]

Lady Townley. Well, let us hope that between his parliamentary duties and his other—attentions [*Looking at Virginia*] Mr. Horace will not degenerate into a—— [*Enter Captain Conway in haste.*]

Conway. Remarkable news has just been reported. It can hardly be believed.

Sir Robert. Well, Captain Conway, what has happened? I suppose that the Pretender's army of ragamuffins has dispersed even before an engagement, and are now flying back to their native dens.

Conway. The reverse, Sir Robert. Listen! The Pretender's forces, as you know, left Edinburgh amid the utmost enthusiasm among the people; marching southward, he completely eluded the royal forces, and increasing the numbers of his own adherents by some thousands, he was finally met by the royal troops at Preston Pans, where a terrible battle took place. It is said that the onslaught of the Highlanders and the Northern rebels was terrific and General Cope's army was cut to pieces. The rebel army marched into England, besieged and took Carlisle in a couple of days and captured Manchester, where James III was proclaimed and several regiments recruited. After occupying Derby, where thousands flocked to his banner, the Pre-

tender is now at the point of marching to London. This is the last report brought in by the couriers. The whole city is in a panic. The banks are already besieged, merchants are shutting up their shops, and Jacobites are everywhere boasting of a change of dynasty, and uttering threats of vengeance against those whom they call the abettors of the Hanoverian usurpation. The whole town is in an uproar. [*Consternation of all except Sir Robert; the Jacobite gentlemen look triumphantly at each other.*]

Lady Townley. We shall all be murdered and robbed.

Sir Robert. This temporary success will only prove to be the prelude to a greater disaster to these adventurers; and those who are now quaking in their shoes, will be ashamed of their silly fears; while the reckless traitors who are now boasting of their future triumph, will soon seek safety in flight to avoid the service of a public executioner.

Conway [Humorously to Horace]. I suppose, Horace, we shall soon find ourselves fugitives and exiles. What shall we do? I shall have to enlist as a private with the King of Prussia, and you——

Horace [Humorously]. Oh, I shall engage as a private teacher of Latin to some Hanoverian country squire's children, unless the fair Virginia here, whose family will probably have interest with the new government, has enough of my estates spared to enable me to live on one of my tenant's farms.

Virginia. This is hardly a time for such jesting, Horace. Even Captain Conway, who is a sol-

dier, should know that a successful enemy is not utterly despicable.

Carlington [*To Sir Robert*]. You appear to be lavish to-day, Sir Robert, with hangings and executions.

Sir Percy. Especially as Sir Robert is getting ready to hang a victorious army. Rather a big job to undertake at this moment. His Highness—I mean Prince Charles—may not thank you very cordially for these amiable intentions.

Sir Robert. You appear to be in a merry mood, Sir Percy, at this cheerful news from those whom I take to be your friends. Take care that your apparent feelings are not translated into acts. Remember the fate of your kinsman Derwentwater who died the death of a traitor after his marauders were disposed of by his late Majesty's loyal troops.

Carlington. Had he been successful you would not have called him a traitor. And those who gloated over the fate of that unfortunate young nobleman and his brave followers, would have been the first to solicit his favour and buy their own safety by betraying each other and their master.

Sir Robert. I can well understand, my lord, that you still have a tender memory for the chiefs of the rebellion of 1715. If I remember rightly, you yourself were not wholly unconnected with the movement in the North at that time. Your father's presence in London when the rising collapsed, and his fulsome protestations of loyalty to the Hanoverian succession inclined the government to disregard what it mercifully chose to consider an

ignorant zeal for a bad cause. Under similar circumstances to-day, age and experience would not gloss over acts of treason.

Carlington. You forget, sir, you are talking to a peer; your present position, which may not last much longer, gives you no right to insult your opponents. Your purchased majority in the House of Commons may protect you for a short while against an inquiry into your administration of the kingdom's affairs—perhaps that same body may soon find it more to their convenience to change their attitude and you may then live to fear those whom, in the arrogance of your crumbling power, you affect to despise and insult.

Sir Robert. Beware, my lord, how you dally with treason. More ancient houses than yours have been brought to ruin by that crime. Thirty years ago your youth saved you. The government will not always be so merciful to the abettors of rebellion. [*Bows to Lord Carlington, who turns his back on him, to talk to his friends. Sir Robert turns to Lady Townley.*] And now, Lady Townley, I must leave this interesting company. [*To Chesterfield.*] My lord, both houses will be assembled early to-morrow. Captain Conway, we shall need your presence elsewhere. Your loyalty is at least beyond doubt. Ladies and gentlemen, your servant. [*Exit Sir Robert and Conway.*]

Lady Townley. I declare I am frightened out of my wits about these horrid rebels.

Chesterfield. Did you hear, Mr. Selwyn? You

must attend Parliament to-morrow early, in the morning!

Horace. Under penalty of being suspected of disaffection to the government. [*Laughing.*]

Lady Montagu. If Mr. Selwyn can be got out of bed for a morning session of the House, no one will doubt of his loyalty.

Lady Townley. Do not heed these base slanderers, Mr. Selwyn.

Selwyn. With you as an ally, Lady Townley, I do not fear even the wit of my Lady Montagu.

Lady Townley. And now, let us go down to supper. [*Offers Mr. Selwyn her arm. During this talk the three Jacobite lords have been talking earnestly together.*] When our bookish friend Mr. Walpole and the fair Virginia have finished their tête-à-tête, they will probably follow.

Sir Percy [*To Lord Carlington*]. I assure you, my lord, all the necessary steps have been taken.

Haxton. We can even count on many secret friends in both houses.

Carlington. Enough. Remember, to-morrow. [*The guests slowly leave the room. Horace and Virginia linger behind.*]

Virginia. Horace, do you love me?

Horace. Can you ask, Virginia? For two years I have been at your feet, worshipping the ground you trod on. Why do you ask?

Virginia. Horace, great events are impending. I must speak. You say you love me. You now have an opportunity of not only showing your affection, but of binding mine to yours forever. How

much my heart is yours—yes, my soul, you know. Oh, Horace, will you, will you prove it to me now?

Horace. Ask anything of me, Virginia, dearest Virginia,—can there be anything that I would refuse to her who is dearer to me than my own life? [*Taking her hand and kissing it.*]

Virginia. Listen, Horace; you have now heard of the favourable, nay, almost decisive turn that the affairs of him, whom we regard as our lawful King, have taken; and how his son Prince Charles, at the head of a large and enthusiastic army, is even now marching to London to claim his father's heritage.

Horace. I infer from what I have heard that the Pretender has had some success, and is said to be on his way to London; but nothing that need give the government any serious fears.

Virginia. But you do not know all. Hear me, Horace, for I am in possession of facts which should convince you that the days of this foreign dominion are nearly over. The King of France, who is thoroughly in sympathy with the cause of King James the Third, has secretly permitted an expedition to be formed, made up largely of our own exiles, which is expected to land and to co-operate with the Prince's forces. But this is not all. Within a short time, our friends in many parts of the kingdom will have risen. In London itself, our partisans are so strong that even a part of the troops stationed here are ready to renounce the Elector of Hanover when the word is given, and long before the Prince arrives in London, King

James the Third will be proclaimed at Westminster.

Horace. Virginia, these are but idle fancies. The whole movement will collapse quicker than it was formed.

Virginia. Horace, you are unreasonably biased by your father's views, whose long years of tranquil power prevent him from seeing the downfall of this long Hanoverian misgovernment. The people who are longing for the expulsion of this foreign usurper and the restoration of their rightful monarch, are ready everywhere to welcome the change. I know your own sense of what is honourable must convince you of the justice of his cause, which is that of the people. Now, Horace, realise the march of events. My father, who is all-powerful with our exiled monarch and his son, as also with the French court, will doubtless soon occupy, under the new government, a high position close to the restored monarch.

Horace. I am sorry to see how deeply your father seems implicated in these desperate schemes. I can only hope, for your sake as well as his, that his own share in these transactions, if he is involved in them, will not lead him into the disaster which he is apparently inviting.

Virginia. You know the enmity subsisting between him and your father.

Horace. They naturally hate each other. My father is the minister of King George the Second, while yours is more than suspected of being an adherent of the Stuart family.

Virginia. Their differences, Horace, are a hopeless obstacle to our union. It is in your power now to remove this obstacle. With the fall of the Hanoverian usurper, a question of but a few days, and the restoration of the rightful monarch, you surely cannot fail to see where your interest lies.

Horace. Hear me, Virginia, you and your unfortunate friends are under many strange delusions. You are not aware of the enormous military and naval forces at the disposal of the government, ready to crush this rising in a few weeks at most; you are also strangely deluded in believing that the mass of the people have the slightest sympathy with the Stuarts, whose principles and opinions linger only in the minds of a few disaffected persons. Even of those, only a few are foolhardy enough to risk their lives in this expedition, which is more like a raid of wild Highlanders and bandits than a really formidable invasion. Let me beseech of you to induce your father to give no countenance to these plottings which can only lead him to destruction.

Virginia. Horace, you are blinded by over-confidence, and do not know the real state of the country. We are in possession of information which makes the speedy success of our friends a certainty. Horace, for my sake, be wise; write to Prince Charles making your submission, and use your influence for the cause. Your attitude will not only protect your father from the consequences of his long service to the Hanoverian usurpers, but will remove all obstacles to our union.

Horace. I am a loyal subject of King George II, and shall always remain one; even if the insane plans of your Jacobite friends were sure of success, I should never for a moment swerve from my allegiance.

Virginia. Horace [*Taking both his hands*], will you not for my sake, for the love I have for you, join this righteous cause, which is at the point of triumph? Do you not love me?

Horace [*Passionately*]. Do I love you, Virginia? You can never know how much my happiness, my whole life, is in your hands. If the cause you so warmly advocate were just, even without your solicitation, my sword and my life would be at Prince Charles's disposal; but like all right-minded Englishmen, I consider that the Stuart family have long since forfeited all right to rule in this country; and I shall live and die a loyal adherent of the present establishment.

Virginia. Think of your danger when our cause wins, and we *shall win*.

Horace. This is folly, madness, dearest Virginia. Let me implore you, by all the love I bear you, for your sake, for your father's, to abandon the desperate schemes of these conspirators.

Virginia [*Proudly*]. We are incapable of betraying our friends or abandoning a just cause. And do you then refuse to join us?

Horace. I do.

Virginia [*Coldly*]. Very well, then; do as you please, Mr. Walpole. You apparently care very little for me. You have made your choice and I

have made mine. You have thrown away your happiness in a way that shows how little you value it. Our intimacy is ended forever.

Horace. This surely cannot be your last resolve?

Virginia. It is, and irrevocably.

Horace [Earnestly]. Hear me, Virginia; is it to be my fate to see you and your father throwing yourself heedlessly into destruction, with me unable to prevent it and save you?

Virginia [Firmly]. Enough of this, Mr. Walpole. We have chosen our paths, and they lie apart. You will now oblige me by considering that this discussion as well as our former relations are now over. Such is my wish, Mr. Walpole, and as a gentleman, I shall expect you to observe it.

Horace [Sadly]. You give me no choice, Lady Virginia, you inflict on me a wound deeper than you realise; I am still your friend. It is your wish that we part, and I leave you, now. But, Lady Virginia, if at any time you should find yourself in any danger, I trust you will consider me at your service to render assistance.

Virginia [Bowing coldly]. Thank you, Mr. Walpole, I shall not want your help. We shall soon be in a position to grant rather than beg favours. Good evening, Mr. Walpole. [*Horace bows and exit. Virginia sinks on a sofa, and covers her face with her hands.*]

[*Curtain.*]

ACT II

SCENE.—*Room in Lord Carlington's mansion.*

[*Discovered: Carlington, Haxton, Sir Percy Campbell, four or five other Jacobite conspirators (supers) seated at a table which is placed a little in the background.*]

Carlington. Gentlemen, the time has come for striking a decisive blow. I have here a letter from Prince Charles announcing his intention of marching immediately to London.

Haxton. Where are the troops of the Duke of Cumberland which have been sent out against him?

Carlington. They have again been outwitted by the Prince, and are many miles behind him.

Sir Percy. It is then clear that the Prince's army will be in London several days before they can be overtaken.

Carlington. No doubt of it. There is nothing now in the way.

Haxton. What is the actual strength of Prince Charles's army?

Carlington. He has with him nearly 8,000 Highlanders, about 4,000 well-equipped men raised by the Northern gentry, besides several regiments recruited in Manchester, also several thousand who have flocked to his banner from the Southern coun-

ties. In all, he commands an army of nearly 13,000 foot and 2,000 horse. This force is sure to be increased by thousands on his way to London. There are no troops between Derby and the capital to prevent an occupation of London. The few regiments at the disposal of the Elector of Hanover are too insignificant to make any effective resistance. And now, gentlemen, for the disposition of this night's plans. Before to-morrow morning every strong place must be in our hands, and our forces placed. [*To Haxton.*] My lord, are your friends prepared?

Haxton. Five hundred men, well armed, and drilled, are about Hounslow Heath, ready to march to the city under the command of Captain Jermyn at about three o'clock. They will be re-inforced by many of Braybury's tenants, and by a number of men brought up by the Jacobite gentry of Kent.

Carlington. Good! With about fifteen hundred men under arms for King James at that point, we are masters of the City. What about the Elector of Hanover's forces at Finchley Common?

Sir Percy. Only a couple of regiments; many of the men, including several of the principal officers, are with us and are ready to renounce their allegiance to the usurper, and join us as soon as King James is proclaimed.

Haxton. Have all our friends in both houses of Parliament been notified of the hour of the rising?

Carlington. I have a list of nearly two hundred who will be in readiness at the hour appointed, with

their retainers and friends. Of these a considerable number are at Lord Northam's, while others have rendez-voused at Sir Henry Richmond's mansion in Chelsea; a third body under Colonel Renton is in a large private house near the Tower. All these divisions only await the signal.

Sir Percy. Have the arrangements been completed for the capture of the Tower?

Carlington. It is as good as ours already. The guards have been doubled; but our friends inside are ready to open the gates for us; the Governor is my friend and ready to yield at the slightest show of force, while Colonel Renton with his division will promptly occupy it in the name of King James.

Sir Percy. What measures have been provided for the seizure of the Palace?

Carlington. That has been left as an early morning surprise to the force under Colonel Renton. The Elector of Hanover will be seized and with his German hangers-on will be promptly lodged in the Tower until Prince Charles packs him off to his German electorate.

Haxton. On how large a force, my lord, do you count on having at your disposal by to-morrow morning?

Carlington. According to the final reports from the chiefs of our adherents, nearly 5,000 men will take part in this night's movement; and by to-morrow morning, when every strong place including the Tower is in our possession, thousands of those who have not yet openly announced their adhesion

will immediately join us. Long before Prince Charles arrives, King James will be proclaimed at Westminster, the Tower, and Charing Cross.

Haxton. What preparations have the government made for a surprise like the one to be sprung this night?

Carlington. . Practically none of any consequence. The few regiments at Finchley Common, the small garrison at the Tower, and the guard at the Palace. The Southern and Western regiments have been sent for, but cannot arrive for nearly two days; while the Hanoverian troops, the only ones on which the usurper can safely rely, are not expected to land for at least three days. With London in our hands to-morrow morning, and all our secret friends in the government and in Parliament declaring for King James, we shall be in actual occupation as the provisional government until the arrival of Prince Charles.

Sir Percy. How about the Southern and Western regiments and Duke of Cumberland's army?

Carlington. When once Prince Charles is established as the head of the government in possession, the few regiments coming from the South and the West will be hopelessly outnumbered and will doubtless declare for their rightful king. As for the Duke of Cumberland's army, which is made up half of Dutch mercenaries, we can hardly expect that the English troops among them will join Dutchmen in attempting the hopeless task of capturing the city. We have nothing to fear from

them. The Duke of Cumberland and the other members of the Elector's family will be only too glad to make terms for their speedy departure from this kingdom.

Haxton. I hope that the tools of this long Hanoverian usurpation, like that old rascal Walpole, will not have time to get away.

Sir Percy. It would be a rare sight to see that old fox paying with his head on Tower Hill for all his villainies.

Carlington. Our king and his son Prince Charles are disposed to be merciful to those who, under force, have concurred in this long misgovernment. But such persons as have been guilty of intentional wickedness and oppression, will be left to a loyal and unbribed Parliament to dispose of as it sees fit. [*Enter Virginia, who whispers to Lord Carlington.*] Everything is in perfect preparation. Gentlemen, you will now accompany me to my study to meet our friends and agents to make our final dispositions for the rising. In two hours from now, the orders to march must be in the hands of our leaders, and before daybreak their forces must be in possession of the city. [*All rise to leave except Virginia.*]

Virginia. Oh, how I wish I were a man to march with you and strike a blow for so glorious a cause.

Haxton. The days of Amazons, madam, are unfortunately over. Otherwise we should gladly take service under such a dashing general.

Sir Percy. If Lady Virginia is so dangerous in times of peace, what a terrible conqueror she would be with an army at her back. [*Exit all except Virginia.*]

Virginia. To-morrow, then, and then the King will have his own again. But—Horace—the son of that hard minister of the Hanoverian—no—he did not care for me or else he would have joined us in the good cause—perhaps when the Stuarts are again on the throne, he may then—but no, we are now sundered forever. [*Pauses. Enter Horace furtively, muffled in a long cloak.*]

Horace. Virginia, Lady Carlington—

Virginia [*Startled*]. Mr. Walpole, what is the meaning of this visit, and at this hour—secretly?

Horace. Lady Virginia, I have come here at the risk of my reputation, my whole future career, perhaps my life—but I must speak to you.

Virginia. There can be no occasion for this visit that I can imagine; you have no right to enter our house, and stealthily, at this hour, unless you have changed your mind, and are now willing—

Horace. There is no time for discussion—or explanation—I have come to warn you for the last time—you little know your danger—you are on the brink of a precipice.

Virginia. Enough of this tragic vein, Mr. Walpole. I thought we had settled that and all other relations between us.

Horace. Lady Virginia, I come here to you as your best friend—as one who would save you and

your father from a fatal step, while there is but a short time——

Virginia. I thank you for your solicitude for me and my father. Perhaps your own father will be in need of your assistance, and much sooner.

Horace. You are persistent in your blind delusions until it will be too late. Hear me if only for a few moments.

Virginia. A few moments, Mr. Walpole, and then I hope you will terminate this visit which can only be painful to both of us.

Horace. I cannot divulge to you facts or state secrets which have been communicated to me under the most solemn pledge of silence.

Virginia. I have not asked you either to come here or to divulge anything——

Horace. I have come to solemnly warn you—to tell you that you are in the greatest danger. I beseech you, Virginia, by all the love you once had for me, by my own affection for you, to heed what I say. It may soon be too late. You and your father must leave London at once, this minute——

Virginia. Mr. Walpole, you are presuming on our former relations to give advice when it is unasked; and for some imaginary reasons, to try to terrify with vague warnings those who fear neither your mysterious hints nor your implied threats——

Horace. Lady Virginia, nothing is further from my mind than to threaten. Are you so blinded by your thoughtless zeal for the cause in which you have embarked not to see how hopeless——

Virginia. Enough of this, Mr. Walpole; you must really spare me any further talk of this kind.

Horace. Hear me for the last time, Virginia—do not let me see you fall a victim. I would save you—will you not heed my warning? I dare not say more—I beseech you—leave London with your father at once—while there is yet time.

Virginia. And desert our friends? Never! Mr. Walpole, you are deceived in everything. And now leave me, sir, or I shall think your motive in coming here is not that of a supposed friend but that of a—— [*Enter all the preceding characters with looks and gestures of surprise. Momentary silence.*]

Haxton. So, Mr. Walpole, your masters have found fitting employment for you at last. As a sinecurist pensioner, you were at least ornamental. As a spy, you hope to be useful.

Carlington. Your presence here at this hour, Mr. Walpole, requires explanation. It is not customary for gentlemen to enter secretly into a house with honourable motives, especially as your known attitude towards me and my friends is one of open enmity.

Horace. Lord Haxton's insolent imputation I fling back in his teeth; there will probably be no occasion for me to call him to account for his insult. To you, my lord, I shall merely state that I came here to make a communication to Lady Carlington. My errand being terminated, I beg

leave to withdraw. [*The Jacobites bar Horace's exit.*]

Carlington. Pardon me, Mr. Walpole—that may not be. You came here unasked. Your motive is, at least, suspicious. I once more ask you honestly to tell the object of this midnight intrusion.

Virginia. Father, Mr. Walpole merely came to offer some needless advice. He may now retire.

Sir Percy. He has come as a spy.

Horace. That is a lie.

Carlington. Gentlemen, this is my affair, kindly leave it to me. Virginia, whatever the pretended motive of his visit may be, I refuse to accept so flimsy an excuse. Mr. Walpole, once more I demand from you the real cause of this visit.

Horace. Lady Virginia has told you. I decline to add more to her explanation. And I now insist upon being permitted to retire.

Carlington. We cannot permit you to depart at present. I regret to say, Mr. Walpole, that you will have to consider yourself for to-night a guest in my house. You will be treated as is befitting a gentleman of your station. The period of your detention will be only till to-morrow morning, when you will be restored to liberty.

Horace. My lord, I refuse your amiable hospitality and demand to be permitted to retire. You have no right to detain me, I am not a robber who has entered your house.

Haxton. Mr. Walpole is too prosperous to undertake so hazardous an occupation.

Horace. I cannot notice the insolent sneers of a disaffected politician. My lord, I once more insist upon retiring, and warn you that the indignity put upon me may be a very costly one to all concerned. I came here on an errand of friendship to Lady Virginia, and desire to go now. [*Attempts to leave, is prevented, and draws his sword.*]

Virginia [*Aside*]. Mr. Walpole, Horace, stay. There may be reasons.

Horace [*To Virginia*]. I know there are reasons. Gentlemen, let me pass. [*All but Carlington draw their swords.*]

Carlington. Time is pressing. You cannot leave this house to-night. Put up your sword, Mr. Walpole. You will be well treated, but stay here in this house you must, for this night.

Horace. I will pass, and again I warn you, my lord, that you are playing a very dangerous game. [*Attempts to force his way, swords are crossed.*]

Virginia [*Placing herself between*]. Gentlemen, you will not, for my sake——

Carlington [*Pulling Virginia away*]. Daughter, you do not understand. Very well, Mr. Walpole, since you oblige me to use force. Gentlemen, disarm him. [*In the sword-play, Horace is seized from behind, disarmed and forcibly held.*]

Horace. Gentlemen, you will bitterly regret this act. I am in your hands for the moment and must

submit. [*Enter suddenly and in haste, Firebrace Pendrel.*]

Carlington. Mr. Pendrel!

Pendrel. My Lord Carlington, gentlemen, I have barely had time to come from the North——

Carlington. What news.—All is well, I presume.

Pendrel [*Speaking aside with Carlington, Haxton, and Sir Percy*]. Gentlemen, our cause is hopeless, the Prince's army is in full retreat from Derby, the expedition is abandoned, our followers are dispersing, the retreat seems to have become a disorderly flight. As for me, I shall at once seek a somewhat healthier climate.

Carlington. Do you mean that the despatches we have received of the progress of the army, the arrangements concerted with our friends here, the preparations for our final stroke of this night——

Pendrel. I can explain no further. It is no longer time for explanations, not to speak of a rising, but for safety. Gentlemen, I bid you good evening—I trust to meet you soon in Paris. [*Exit. They all look surprised at each other.*]

Carlington. Gentlemen, we have gone too far to retreat. Our plans of to-night must be carried out. When once we have occupied the City, and have proclaimed King James, I shall despatch messengers to Prince Charles and the leaders of the army. Once our followers in possession of London, and our cause is triumphant, even in spite of this temporary check. And now [*To the con-*

spirators guarding Horace], conduct this gentleman to my guest-chamber, and see that he is properly watched, but do not let him come to any harm. The hour is now pressing. Gentlemen, are you now ready to carry out our plans?

All. Yes—at once.

Horace [*Tearing himself away from his captors and seizing his sword*]. Traitors, you are rushing your doom. Lady Virginia, once more I ask you to remember what I said to you—— [*Movement towards Horace by the conspirators, Virginia rushes between. At this moment enter Captain Conway and Soldiers.*]

[*Curtain.*]

ACT III

SCENE.—*Room in Sir Robert Walpole's house.*

TIME.—*About four weeks later. [Sir Robert and Selwyn at the table with papers.]*

Selwyn. As usual, Sir Robert, you have shown yourself a statesman, more than a match for all your enemies, open and secret. At one time I feared for the kingdom. You have again earned the gratitude of your King and your country.

Sir Robert. Tut, my dear boy. We were better prepared for the rebels and traitors than even the friends of the government knew. [*Taking papers and writing.*] So much for Sir Percy Campbell, who is to be executed to-morrow; [*Signing other papers*] here is a batch of the others;—ah! Lord Haxton is to have the honour of being beheaded on Tower Hill, a special favour.

Selwyn. His lordship must be infinitely obliged to the government for the privilege of the block instead of the halter. What is the news from the North, Sir Robert?

Sir Robert. The Duke of Cumberland is expected to come up with the rebels in about a week or two. All danger, if any ever existed, is now over. We have now only to deal with the bands of traitors and conspirators at home.

Selwyn. The courts and the House of Lords

are kept pretty busy nowadays. How many in all were arrested here in London?

Sir Robert. Some forty or fifty noblemen and gentlemen were implicated in this projected rising in London, including several members of the House of Commons and one peer. Of these, several escaped, but all the important members of the conspiracy were taken.

Selwyn. You mean, of course, those into whose hands Horace had fallen when Captain Conway arrested Lord Carlington's party?

Sir Robert. They were by far the most dangerous, and the heads of the conspiracy in London.

Selwyn. Strange that Horace should have been in Lord Carlington's house at such a critical moment.

Sir Robert. Hush! The less said of that the better. Remember, Selwyn, you are his friend—and Horace is only as yet a boyish Quixotic dreamer.

Selwyn. I suspect, Sir Robert, that the bright eyes of the old Jacobite's daughter were the magnet that drew Horace into that nest of traitors. To think that Horace, the student, the scholar, amid his books and pictures, should lose his heart to a fair rebel——

Sir Robert. Your bookish men are the most susceptible to female wiles. They see everything through the charmed medium of their own imagination. But Horace's eyes will now be opened, especially as the old traitor of a father of this girl

will soon be sent to his final account. [*Enter Chesterfield.*]

Chesterfield. Sir Robert, your servant. How is Mr. Selwyn? [*Shakes hands.*]

Selwyn. Has the House of Lords finished the trial of Lord Carlington?

Chesterfield. It is all over, gentlemen. The guilt of Lord Carlington was so clear that even his friends did not venture to defend him very strenuously. All the peers voted guilty except the few disaffected Jacobite lords who abstained from voting.

Sir Robert. And the sentence?

Chesterfield. Death on the block on Tower Hill unless His Majesty should see fit to extend to him the royal clemency of banishment instead.

Sir Robert. That is practically excluded. The King cannot pardon a traitor who conspired to dethrone him and to plunge the country into the horrors of a civil war. The decision will take its course.

Selwyn. I can only approve your view, Sir Robert.

Chesterfield. He deserves his fate. My only sympathy is for his fair daughter.

Sir Robert. He should have thought of that before plotting to seize the Tower, the City and the person of His Majesty—besides, his daughter is as fanatical a Jacobite as he is—her sex alone has protected her from her father's fate. [*Enter Horace.*] Ah, Horace, you come in time to hear that

the ringleader of the band that offered you violence several weeks ago has been condemned to the block; I mean, of course, Lord Carlington.

Horace [*Quietly*]. So I have heard, the news has sped very fast.

Sir Robert. You seem sad about it, Horace.

Horace. I cannot rejoice over the misfortunes of others.

Selwyn. Not over those who would probably have murdered you when they had you in their hands and you attempted to escape them?

Horace [*Quietly*]. I am not so sure of that, They merely wished to keep me a temporary prisoner.

Chesterfield. Or kill you if you attempted to escape.

Sir Robert. Why, Horace, you surely are not going to waste your sympathy on a hardened old conspirator, the enemy of your king and of this free constitution?

Horace. Blood enough has already been shed.

Sir Robert. Had these villainies succeeded, our positions, our estates, even our lives, would have been at the mercy of their rapacious followers.

Horace. But they did not succeed, and perhaps a little mercy——

Sir Robert. Mercy—what nonsense! The only mercy we could have expected from them is the mercy they now receive. They wanted our heads—now we take theirs.

Selwyn. How did Carlington receive his sentence?

Chesterfield. He merely bowed and thanked their lordships.

Horace. At least he is not a coward. Has he no chance of the royal clemency?

Sir Robert. Royal clemency! What stuff you are talking, my boy. No power can save this arch-plotter. Blacker treason was never attempted. No one could intercede openly in his behalf without ruin. Nor would His Majesty hear of mercy to one who would have dethroned him.

Chesterfield. His doom is sealed and will close the long chapter of plot and treason for that worthless family, the Stuarts.

Sir Robert. You are right, my lord. The kingdom will now have rest. [*Enter Jenks.*]

Jenks. Sir Robert, the Council of State is assembled.

Sir Robert. Gentlemen, we must now enter upon the task of consulting on the various measures which have arisen out of this affair. The Northern rebels, although hastening to their native glens, have not yet been caught by the royal troops, but their destruction is imminent. The task before us is to unearth the various ramifications of this movement, to pacify the kingdom, and to prevent a recurrence of these disorders. [*Exeunt all but Horace, who sits down dejected. Enter hastily Virginia, who throws herself at Horace's feet.*]

Horace. Virginia!

Virginia [*In great agitation*]. Yes, Horace, I am here. Oh, save my father; I know you can—or these wretches will murder him before my eyes. My father to die this ignominious death. Yes, Horace, my pride is humbled—forgive me for what I said to you—I am now at your feet, a suppliant bowed to earth, crushed; I am almost mad with grief. My mother dead years ago—my father whom I love more than my own life— Oh, Horace, save him—save my life—for I am all alone. I cannot survive this blow, nay, I will not. If you ever had any love for me, Horace——

Horace. [*Raising her*]. Calm yourself, Virginia, dear Virginia!

Virginia. Horace, dear Horace, you will save him. Oh, promise me you will. I cling to your feet, the most miserable of God's creatures—a broken-hearted wretch. Pity me, and save my father from the horrid death that awaits him.

Horace. Virginia, all that I can do, I will do; but I fear to give you hopes that may prove fruitless.

Virginia. Yes, Horace, dear Horace, you will save him. Your father can—he must for your sake. You will go to the King, you will tell him how noble it will be for him to be magnanimous—what blessings, what prayers, what gratitude, a poor orphaned girl will have for him. You will tell him that my own life is in his hands—my father's death can do him no good—he will leave England forever. Oh, Horace, you will intercede for him

—you love me, do you not? For my sake, you will intercede; you will help him escape from his jailers. Oh, I shall go mad—Horace, I beseech you, I implore, on my knees to you, Horace, save him, save my life, for I cannot, I will not, live if he is taken from me.

Horace. Virginia, dear Virginia, I love you, my heart, my life is yours. What can be, will be done—I will speak to my father—I will even go to the King himself—only compose yourself now; it may not be hopeless.

Virginia. Heaven bless you for those words. Oh, Horace, how cruel, how heartless I have been to you. But I was blinded to everything but my faith in our cause. And now, I am orphaned, friendless, hopeless, with only madness and the grave before me.

Horace. Do not thus abandon yourself to despair, Virginia. While I live you will always have one whose whole life is devoted to you, who will live only for you. If England is so cruel to us, we can go elsewhere, for I shall never leave you. But listen—I believe I hear my father returning from the Council. Step into this boudoir here—my father must and shall grant me what you ask. Virginia, dearest—hope! [*Virginia steps into an adjoining room. Enter Sir Robert.*]

Sir Robert. Well, thank goodness, that is over. It was but a brief meeting of the Council, Horace, but it was at least harmonious——

Horace. In what, father?

Sir Robert. On the fate of the condemned traitors——

Horace. Then I suppose——

Sir Robert. It was unanimously resolved, and with the strongest insistence, that no pleas for mercy for any of the condemned traitors be entertained for a moment. Treason and rebellion must be totally destroyed, root and branch. His Majesty himself is known to be of the same view.

Horace. It seems perhaps a needless severity now that they can do no more harm.

Sir Robert. What nonsense, Horace! If the government took any other view, it would have little else to do but defend its own existence. This thing must be stamped out once and for all. And why, Horace, are you so lukewarm in this matter of punishing treason?

Horace [*Changing his manner, and becoming firm*]. Father, it is time now for me to speak seriously to you of one aspect of this affair that lies on my heart.

Sir Robert. And what is that, Horace? You surely can have no further particular interest in this matter, now that it is at an end.

Horace. I have. Listen to me, father. You and my sainted mother have both been very good to me. My mother left me at her death an ample competence, with independence of all worldly needs for my station. And you, father, have favoured me beyond any of the reasonable expectations of a younger son. You have advanced me in public

life, obtained my election to Parliament, have secured me public positions far beyond my merits. How grateful I am for this I can never tell you.

Sir Robert. Tut, my boy; why speak of these things to me now? You know you have always been my favourite. Your older brothers are but like their weather-beaten old father—country squires and fox-hunters, but they care nothing for a public career. You are the one to hand down the Walpole tradition of statesmanship in which I have endeavoured to educate you. You have more brains and education than all the rest of them put together. But, Horace, what do you mean? I do not understand these mysterious hints of something in your heart.

Horace. Hear me, father. Several years ago, while in Italy, I met an English family in Florence; it consisted of an English nobleman, his wife, who was an Italian noblewoman, and their young daughter. The mother died not long after my intimacy with the family began, and it was my sorrowful task to console the young lady under this bereavement. Our friendship soon ripened into a deeper feeling, and when the father and daughter returned to England, we again met.

Sir Robert. And you are still in love with each other—but what has that to do with the punishment of the traitors?

Horace. The lady of whom I speak is the daughter of Lord Carlington.

Sir Robert [*Springing from his chair*]. Horace, are you mad?

Horace. Hear me out, father. This unhappy girl is distracted by the impending fate of her only protector, the father to whom alone she clings. If her father suffers death for his adherence to the cause of the Stuarts, this blow will fall also on her, and she will die, or what is worse, she will lose her reason. I love her, I believe she loves me, and I would save her. Father, you have never had cause to complain of my affection or compliance with your wishes. Grant me this old man's life, for the sake of his daughter, for my sake, for the sake of our love.

Sir Robert. Horace, this is the maddest request ever made. Are you bereft of your senses? This man tried to encompass a revolution; he has always been my bitterest enemy; as you know, he has made more than one attempt in the House of Lords against my position. He has been a plotter and a traitor all his lifetime. He organised a plot to seize the King, which would probably have ended in the murder of His Majesty. He offered you violence in his house, when you, as is well known to me, attempted to warn him through his daughter. And now, you, from a foolish passion for this disloyal girl, make an impossible plea for intercession on his behalf. Horace, do you know what you are asking?

Horace. I do, father, and you must grant my request. The life of this poor girl depends upon it.

Sir Robert. If the lives of twenty young women depended on it, it would not be granted. Do you think for a moment, that England's Prime Minister can venture to solicit a pardon from the King for a traitor who would have dethroned him? And if, for my long service to His Majesty, he granted this request—a thing highly improbable—could I for a moment hold my position as Prime Minister at this critical period? Why, even my staunchest supporters would fall away and believe I had been bribed. But enough of this silly freak. Let me hear no more of it.

Horace. And yet you permitted Bolingbroke, your enemy, to return to England and to live.

Sir Robert. Bolingbroke had made himself harmless, and had paid the penalty by a long exile for his intrigues. But this man is a traitor, caught in a wide-spread revolutionary plot, condemned, and awaiting his execution.

Horace. Once more, father, I beg of you grant me this one request. I love this girl, would marry her——

Sir Robert. What, marry her! You, Horace, a member of Parliament, the son of England's Prime Minister, marry the daughter of a condemned traitor, a girl who herself was notoriously a participator in all these treasonable movements. Boy, you are mad. Would you ruin not only yourself, but your father, and ruin the public careers of all your kinsmen? Would you have the finger of scorn pointed at you? Would you have

the world say that you, a rising young member of Parliament, with a splendid future before you, have thrown away your whole life for a Jacobite traitor's daughter?

Horace. Father, I care nothing for a public career now, nor do I believe that your own interest requires the death of this unfortunate nobleman. I am thinking only of the girl I love, and whose life I would save by saving her father from this ignominious death. Once more, father, I beg of you, give me this man's life.

Sir Robert [Angrily]. Never, Horace, it cannot be. He must suffer the punishment he has merited. What! intercede for the head of a murderous conspiracy which my own watchfulness has balked! Horace, the subject is now settled. You have been the hope and pride of my declining years. Do not now, by yielding to a freakish impulse, make me lose faith in your duty to me as well as to your position.

Horace. Very well, father, you refuse—then I must act alone as my heart prompts me. [*Calls in Virginia. Enter Virginia.*]

Sir Robert [Surprised]. Lady Carlington!

Virginia [Throws herself at Sir Robert's feet]. Sir Robert, oh, have mercy; spare my father's life——

Horace [Raising her]. Say nothing, dear Virginia. [*To Sir Robert.*] Father, you are the only person whose powerful influence stands between this unhappy girl's father and the scaffold;

while I am the only protector this girl has left in the world. You have spoken the doom of her father, but I shall not let your severity kill this girl. Now hear me out, for it may be the last words that pass between us. Your political interest prevents you from sparing the life of Lord Carlington, but my affection for my betrothed will save at least her life. Yes, father, on the day her father is executed, I, the son of England's Prime Minister, will marry the daughter of this traitor! [Pause.]

Virginia. Oh, Sir Robert, you cannot, you will not permit my father to die this shameful death. You will be merciful, you will listen to an orphan's prayer——

Sir Robert [*Firmly, but without sternness, motioning her to a chair*]. Young lady, you young people are governed by your feelings, and do not understand the hard facts of life. I am now an old man, and have learned in the hard life of a statesman how bitter is the awakening of those who follow their passions and not their reason. We plan and contrive with our hearts, but the facts of life undeceive us. Your father, you know, engaged in a conspiracy in a cause that failed and is condemned to pay the penalty. Even if I would, I could not procure for him a pardon [*Slowly*], although there may be a possible outlet.

Virginia. Oh, you will save him; I know you will; you cannot be insensible to the tears of a lonely orphan.

Sir Robert. A pardon or any other act of public clemency is wholly out of the question. But I believe that, under certain conditions, which, from reasons of state, are indispensable, it is possible that your father may escape the fate which he has provoked.

Virginia. Oh, anything you ask of us will be done; we will leave England, we will promise, swear, never to trouble the kingdom again—everything, anything——

Sir Robert. I am aware, young lady, of my son's attachment to you, and it is not so difficult for me to perceive that his feelings are reciprocated. Had your father been loyal to the House of Hanover, instead of spending his life in plottings for the restoration of the Stuarts, nothing would probably have stood in the way of your mutual happiness. I am sorry for you, Lady Virginia; I am deeply sorry for you—I am sorry for my son Horace, in whom my affection and my hopes have hitherto rested. But the hard facts are before us. It must be clear to you, young lady, that I could never consent to your union with my son, without compromising my own position, as well as my son's. A marriage of the Prime Minister's son with the daughter of an executed or pardoned or fugitive rebel, would mean ruin for his father, when the country most needs his service, while it would mean for him but a short happiness, social ostracism here, followed probably by a voluntary and melancholy exile in foreign lands—far

from his friends, his relations, his country—his career ended. Would you, young lady, be happy long with the consciousness of having blighted his life?

Horace. Father, you cannot mean this. Where Virginia is, there I can be happy.

Sir Robert. Boy, you think so now; others have also thought so, and the awakening has taught them that our happiness is as easily marred by the world's circumstances and opinion as by our change of heart. We all would be happy, but it is not written in the book of fate that we always shall be so in the way which we have chosen. Hear me, you are both of you young; the world is yet before you, to each in a separate way. I think I have made it clear to you how ominous for both your lives would be a marriage between you, how utterly disastrous to my family and to Horace's career. I would befriend you in your cause in the only way that I can, under the simple and easy condition I shall impose. Your father cannot be liberated publicly, but an arrangement can be made by which the authorities of the Tower will connive at an escape. A hint, from the proper source, to the guards, coupled with a hundred pounds to each of them, and your father has only to take a passage to France or to Germany. I can promise you that the pursuit of him will not be effective.

Virginia. Heaven bless you, Sir Robert.

Sir Robert. There are, however, these indispensable conditions. You must follow your father,

and you and Horace must pledge to me your solemn word that you will hold no further communication with each other under any circumstances whatever.

Horace. Father, this is cruel. [*Virginia looks at Horace, then looks down; pause.*]

Sir Robert. You have your choice now, Lady Virginia. Either you leave England and renounce all further association with my son, or else your father dies on the scaffold as a traitor. Do you accept my terms?

Virginia [*With emotion, after looking at Horace*]. I accept them, but it is hard.

Sir Robert [*Rising*]. It is best so for you both. In new surroundings, perhaps in Italy where you were born, you will learn to forget——

Virginia. Never—never!

Sir Robert. While Horace, amid the interests and activities of his future career, will also learn to forget or live down an unfortunate passion which could have been gratified only at so fearful a cost. Life's before him.

Horace. Life has nothing for me now.

Sir Robert. Tut, boy, be a man. Lady Virginia here shows more strength than you. Have I your promise, Lady Carlington?

Virginia [*Tearfully*]. Yes.

Sir Robert. And have I yours, Horace? Come, be a man. [*Horace looks at Virginia and nods affirmatively. Sir Robert takes Horace's hand and embraces him.*] That's a brave boy. One thing

more before I go. After the country has been pacified, I will see to it that at least a portion of your father's estates, now forfeited to the crown, shall be restored to you.

Virginia. Thank you, you are so good. [*Virginia takes Sir Robert's hand and kisses it.*]

Sir Robert. And now, bon voyage, remember your promise, and do not think me such a hard-hearted old man, after all. [*Exit Sir Robert. Horace sinks despondently in a chair. Virginia looks pityingly at him.*]

Virginia. Horace, look at me. Are you angry with me?

Horace. Angry with you, Virginia? And for what? I am sick of the world, of everything, of life. A dream of happiness loomed up before me, and only now I realise what has been snatched from me. With you, life would have been one long sunshine holiday, with love and poetry and everything to make life beautiful. What will it now be without you? Nothing.

Virginia [*Sinking at his feet*]. Horace, dear Horace, do not abandon yourself to this gloom. You will kill me. We have loved, and with the purest love that ever inspired two hearts. Such love cannot die, even if fate has forbidden its fruition.

Horace. What can I now be with you taken out of my life? The world to me only a vision of flitting shadows without interest or inspiration, while I shall be only an indifferent lifeless dreamer of a

happiness that fate has withheld. With a bleeding heart, what care I now for ambition or fame or anything?

Virginia [With emotion]. Horace, my beloved, my life! Oh, do not say this. We must part; yes, and our hearts are aching, but let us both show that we have been worthy of such love. My own life in our new home shall be devoted to my poor father. You, Horace, have a noble career before you. You have youth, genius, birth, a lofty spirit, every noble quality that ambition can desire. Go again into the world. Let your talents and your exalted spirit lead you to the path of fame. You have not belonged to me only; you belong also to your family, your friends, and your country; and they all have claims upon you, far greater than a poor, foolish girl whom you might have possessed and whom death might soon have taken from you. Be yourself, Horace. For my sake, take up your life again. You will, will you not? Let my love be to you, not a source of passionate hopeless longing, but an inspiration to noble thoughts and great accomplishments. And then, amid the admiration and applause of the world, you will sometimes think of the poor, silly, half-foreign girl who will always love you and think of you and pray for you. Horace, will you? [*Horace nods sadly. Virginia rests her head on Horace's bosom; he kisses her cheek. She takes his hand and presses it to her bosom, and kisses it; then rising slowly*]. And now, farewell, my Horace, my dearest, my love.

[Virginia goes to the door, while Horace lets his head sink on his arm on the table; she looks back, takes a small chain with a locket from her bosom, glides noiselessly to Horace, pins it on Horace's coat, and leaves the room.]

[Curtain.]

ACT IV

Fifty years later.

SCENE.—*A large room at Strawberry Hill, with pictures, book-cases, sculptures, etc., etc.*

[*Discovered: Horace Walpole (now Earl of Orford) and Henry Conway (now Field Marshal, and in military costume); a small table with bottle and glasses.*]

Horace. Well, my dear Marshal Conway.

Conway. Well, my dear Lord Orford.

Horace. How often am I to tell you that I do not wish you to address me in that way? Plain Horace to you.

Conway. How often am I to remind you that I do not wish you to address me in that way. Plain Harry to you, old fellow.

Horace. There is a difference. When I call you Marshal, I only give myself the pleasure of reminding you as well as myself that your titles and honours have been won in the gallant service of your country, and are but a moderate reward of your merits, while my own title is what? An accident, only the result of domestic bereavement, the death of the last of my elder brothers and my nephew——

Conway. You old hypocrite, you! You wish

to be called Horace in order to make me feel older, when you know we are both on the shady side of the seventies.

Horace [Sadly]. Yes, Harry, we are both dead and buried, fossil relics of past ages, shadows flitting about. If we live much longer, we shall probably save funeral expenses by not dying, but simply evaporating away into thin air.

Conway. Horace, your ante-mortem funeral and evaporation theory excites only my extreme contempt. [*Filling a glass and slapping Horace on the shoulder*]. Here's to ten years more of a jolly green old age. [*They drink.*]

Horace. What a world this is. I have just been thinking of all that has happened during the last fifty years. We seem to have lived centuries.

Conway. What do you expect. Do you think the world will stand still to accommodate a trio of superannuated old fossils, like you and me and Selwyn?

Horace. It has moved rather too fast for me. Think of it; Canada conquered, India and Australia British possessions; our splendid American colonies now a flourishing young republic under a ruler who has more kingly qualities than most monarchs of Europe ever had. The French Revolution——

Conway. Well, what more do you want? This world would be a pretty dull place if nothing unusual ever happened.

Horace. As you are my general purveyor of

gossip and news, tell me, what are the last reports from the war?

Conway. The French republic has formed a new constitution, the third—the Royalists have been everywhere crushed, the Austrians and Prussians everywhere defeated by the Republican generals. By the way, that young fellow, General Bonaparte, who drove us from Toulon, is now commander-in-chief of the French army.

Horace. A boy of twenty-five! But all their generals are boys. The age of old men is over, Harry.

Conway. That boy, as you call him, is likely to give us trouble enough yet. He seems to conduct campaigns and organise battles in complete defiance of the classical principles of warfare.

Horace. So did Frederick, so did Marlborough. The innovators always win when they meet the old fogeys. That is a lesson we shall yet have to learn. What other news have you?

Conway. Rumour has it that the widow of Prince Charles, the Young Pretender, is now the wife, or something like it, of the poet Alfieri. After his hair-brained expedition in '45, he finally drank himself to death, as you know.

Horace. That expedition of the Young Pretender! How often I have cursed it! But for that, I might have—but all that is now dead and buried.

Conway. What?

Horace. Never mind. [*Rings a bell. Enter Jenks, old servant.*] Call Mr. Selwyn.

Jenks. Mr. Selwyn is showing a lady visitor the picture gallery. [*Exit.*]

Horace. Oh, I forgot.

Conway. A lady visitor; who is she?

Horace. Oh, some Italian countess. These visits to Strawberry Hill to see my pictures and rarities are common enough. Whenever Selwyn stops with me, he does the honours of the house. He is stronger in his legs than I am. [*Enter Selwyn, escorting Virginia.*]

Selwyn. Permit me to present you to the Countess Castelnovo, Lord Orford, Marshal Conway.

Horace. [*Not recognizing Virginia.*] I am delighted to welcome you, madam, to my retreat. I hope that my friend Mr. Selwyn, who is much more vigorous for his years than I am, and who serves as a guide here, has been agreeable to you. He was a great beau in his younger days.

Virginia. The fame of Mr. George Selwyn, for gallantry is almost as great as that of his friend, the Earl of Orford, as an author and connoisseur of art.

Horace. You flatter me, Countess. I have been but an idle dabbler in literature and a trifler in the realm of art and antiquity.

Conway. Countess, you must not take his lordship's modesty too seriously. He has written enough to fill a library.

Virginia. And his fame as an author has spread over Europe. Who has not heard of his wonderful romance of the Castle of Otranto, which has kept all its readers awake nights, frightened out of their wits at its horrors.

Horace. It is some comfort to know that my youthful nonsense has served to amuse young people. Thus it is in life: what we take seriously is looked upon as a joke, while what we intend as burlesque is taken seriously by our friends.

Virginia. You pay a very poor compliment to your admirers, Mr. Walpole—I mean Lord Orford.

Selwyn. If I were you, Horace, I should wear my laurels in the fashion my admirers dictated. What difference does it make whether they understand you or not? [*On a sign from Virginia, Selwyn and Conway slowly withdraw.*]

Horace [*Who has been standing*]. Countess, will you sit down?

Virginia. Thank you. [*Looking about*]. So, this is the famed Strawberry Hill. What a beautiful place it is, a perfect fairy palace. And at last I meet its famous master, renowned over Europe for his talents as writer, the arbiter of taste, the restorer of Gothic architecture, the collector of art. For years I have longed for this opportunity of meeting the most famous connoisseur in Europe.

Horace. Madam, what you behold here are but the gatherings of a trifling amateur. We must all

have some occupation to kill time, and tide over the allotted period of this dull existence.

Virginia. How could existence have been dull to one with such resources of intellectual activity as you have had around you? Have you not had everything that could make life one long holiday? You have had society, fame, position, books, pictures—everything.

Horace. Everything?

Virginia [*Slowly*]. Perhaps not quite everything, but your amusing letters to my friend Sir Horace Mann, which he was kind enough always to show me when he was ambassador at the Court of Florence, indicated that your life must have been a happy one.

Horace. Countess, the world is apt to estimate happiness by that which surrounds one. But happiness depends more on the spirit within.

Virginia. True, my lord; but such lively letters as your friend Sir Horace Mann showed me, hardly indicated a gloomy spirit.

Horace. You evidently knew my friend.

Virginia. Very well, indeed.

Horace. We lost him a few years ago. He was one of two or three companions left to me from the days of my boyhood. But nearly all are gone now; only Mr. Selwyn and Marshal Conway survive. Strange that Mann never wrote to me about you; he knew everybody in Florence. You speak our language so like one of ourselves, you seem almost English.

Virginia. I am partly English. [*Pause.*] But one thing occurs to me, my lord. Amid all this magnificence something seems to be lacking.

Horace. And what is that?

Virginia. I should have thought that the owner of such a home, with such treasures, and with such talents, would naturally have cared to share them with some congenial spirit. Excuse my freedom, but we Italians are so inquisitive. Have you been so wedded to your books and your pictures that you have never, never felt you were alone?

Horace [*Looking at her sadly*]. I have tried not to feel lonely.

Virginia. And have you succeeded? Think how much more beautiful your life and your home would have been had they been presided over by some woman you loved. Have you never thought of that? [*Searchingly.*]

Horace. All but that I have had—what you see around you has not been a compensation for that one thing you mention.

Virginia. But surely, it must have been your choice then to have remained single all your lifetime. You have lived here in an intellectual paradise without a companion. What woman would not have been happy to share her life with Horace Walpole? Tell me, my lord, others have often wondered why have you never married. Will you forgive my impertinence in asking?

Horace. How can I consider an amiable curiosity an impertinence?

Virginia. Then, come, tell me.

Horace. It is a story of a long, long time ago.

Virginia. Was she unfaithful? If she was, she surely did not deserve you.

Horace. No, I cannot tell you more, Countess. That story is buried here. [*Touching his breast.*]

Virginia [*Pointing to a picture.*] Who is that?

Horace. That is a picture painted for me by Sir Joshua Reynolds from this miniature. [*Pointing to a miniature on the table.*] It is the daughter of an unfortunate nobleman who was implicated in the unhappy affair of '45. They were obliged to leave England.

Virginia. What if I told you that I knew that lady in Florence?

Horace. Indeed, then you know Lord Carlington and his beautiful daughter Virginia?

Virginia. Very well, indeed; they lived in Florence.

Horace. I have never heard what became of her. I suppose she married. A lady of such singular charms must have soon made a suitable union.

Virginia. No, she never married. She remained faithful to an early attachment formed under unfortunate circumstances, which prevented its consummation.

Horace. Then I suppose she embraced a religious life and retired from the world in which she was so lovely an ornament.

Virginia. Virginia Carlington did not enter a convent. She inherited some property from her

mother's family with another name and a title. Under this name she lived in seclusion, devoting herself to the improvement of her mind and to acts of charity. But every day of her life she thanked and prayed for him who, to save her father's life, sacrificed his own happiness. [*Pause.*]

Horace. Is she still living?

Virginia. Yes.

Horace. Where is she now?

Virginia. She is here!

Horace. Virginia!

Virginia. Horace! [*While they sink into each other's arms,—.*]

[*Curtain.*]





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